United Nations A/50/PV.100

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

100th plenary meeting
Saturday, 23 December 1995, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will today consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on the items on its agenda.

I invite the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Maddens (Belgium), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour today to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee on the items on its agenda.

Members will recall that at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly 34 items were allocated to the Fifth Committee.

From 21 September to 22 December the Fifth Committee held 45 formal meetings. All the negotiations on the items on its agenda took place in informal consultations, which, in conformity with the Committee's usual practice, were presided over by various representatives on the Fifth Committee. I am happy to inform the Assembly that all the draft resolutions and draft decisions adopted during this first part of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly were adopted by consensus.

I shall now present a brief report on the work of the Fifth Committee.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 113, "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", is contained in document A/50/839, in paragraph 6 of which the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution, which the Committee adopted without a vote following informal consultations presided over by the Tunisian Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 114, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", is contained in document A/50/840. In that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions. Draft decision I relates to certain items and relevant reports consideration of which is deferred to the resumed fiftieth session. Draft decision II concerns the biennial programme of work for the Fifth Committee for 1996-1997. In approving a draft proposal submitted orally by the Chairman, the Committee also decided to include in draft decision I a recommendation to the General Assembly that consideration of agenda item 114 be deferred to the resumed fiftieth session. These three draft decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 115, "Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995",

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is contained in document A/50/841, in paragraph 4 of which the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 116, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", is contained in document A/50/842. Because of the lateness of the hour at which the Fifth Committee adopted its decisions last night, I must make some oral corrections to some of the figures in document A/C.5/50/L.29. In paragraph 9 of Part I of that document, page 13, the figure for "Income from staff assessment" should read $384,306,000. On page 14, the figure for "Total, income from staff assessment" should read $382,679,100, and the figure for "Total, income sections" should read $471,401,700.

In document A/C.5/50/L.29 (Part II), in draft resolution II B, the figure for "Income from staff assessment" should again read $384,306,000 and the figure for "Total, income sections" should read $471,401,700.

In paragraph 1 of draft resolution II C in the same document, the figure "26,760,900 dollars" should read "24,160,900 dollars", and the figure in paragraph 1 (b) should read "1,285,696,850 dollars". In paragraph 2, the figure "202,635,900 dollars" should read "197,885,900 dollars" and the figure "196,903,000 dollars" should read "192,153,000 dollars".

Document A/50/842 contains a number of recommendations that the Committee adopted without a vote. Given the importance of this item, I want to convey the admiration of all representatives for the coordinators of the informal consultations on the proposed programme budget. Their patience, ability and know-how will be our happiest memory of this session. I know that one of the two coordinators, Mr. Martin Sharp of Australia, has left New York to take up other duties in his country. I would like on behalf of my colleagues in the Committee and on my own account to ask the Australian delegation to communicate our thanks to him.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 119, "Pattern of conferences", is contained in document A/50/837, in which the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was negotiated under the leadership of our German colleague and which the Committee adopted without a vote.

I turn to agenda item 120, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations". The report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/843. In paragraph 12 the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, and in paragraphs 13 and 14 it recommends the adoption of two draft decisions; all three were adopted by the Committee without a vote following informal consultations conducted by the representative of Ireland.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 121, "United Nations common system", is contained in document A/50/844, in paragraph 7 of which the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, negotiations on which were chaired by our colleague from New Zealand; the Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 123, "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission", is contained in document A/50/845. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

On agenda item 125, "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", the report of the Fifth Committee on that item is contained in document A/50/819. In paragraph 6 of that document the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was presented orally by the Chairman of the Committee and which the Committee adopted without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 126, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador", is contained in document A/50/818. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was presented to the Committee orally and which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 131, "Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus", is contained in document A/50/827. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision presented by the Chairman of the Committee and adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 132, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia", is contained in document A/50/820, in paragraph 6 of which the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of a draft decision presented orally and adopted without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 137, "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan", is contained in document A/50/828. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of a draft decision presented orally and adopted without a vote.

The reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 138, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations", are in documents A/50/821 and its addendum; A/50/850 and its addendum; and A/50/851. These reports contain draft decisions on a mock-up budget for peace-keeping operations; the relocation of Palau to group D of the scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations; the use of the support account for peace-keeping operations pending the in-depth consideration of this subject that should take place at the resumed session next spring; the necessary amendments to the Financial Regulations to take into account the changes put in place by resolution 49/233; and deferral of the draft decision submitted by Ukraine to the first resumption of the fiftieth session. These draft decisions were adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 166, "Admission of the World Tourism Organization to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund", is contained in document A/50/822. In paragraph 5 of that report the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision by which the World Tourism Organization would be admitted to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The Committee adopted this draft decision without a vote.

Finally, Mr. President, the Fifth Committee, at your request, was also involved in the Assembly's consideration in plenary meeting of agenda item 164, entitled "Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa".

I cannot conclude my statement without expressing the gratitude of all members of the Fifth Committee for the help we received from the Secretariat staff, in particular from the Department of Administration and Management. The assistance of the Under-Secretary-General and his staff and the Secretary of the Committee and his staff made it possible for us to finish our work in a climate of cooperation and consensus. We know that the results of our work constitute an enormous challenge to our colleagues in the Secretariat, but we are confident that their ability will ensure the successful implementation of our decisions.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 113

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/839)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/204 A to D).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/840)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Action taken on certain items".

The Fifth Committee adopted this draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: We now turn to draft decision II, entitled "Biennial programme of work for the Fifth Committee for 1996-1997".

The Fifth Committee adopted this draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

Agenda item 115

Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/841)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of its report.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/205 A and B).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 119

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/837)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/206 A to F).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/843)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 12 of its report and the two

draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraphs 13 and 14 of its report.

We turn first to the draft resolution contained in paragraph 12 of the report. It was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/207).

The President: We now turn to the two draft decisions.

Draft decision I was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: Draft decision II was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

Agenda item 121

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/844)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The draft resolution, entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/208).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

Agenda item 123

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/845)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/209).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 123.

Agenda item 128 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/50/796/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 134

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/846)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/210).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 135

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/848)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/211).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 135.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/849)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/212).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/50/821/Add.1)

The President: I call on the representative of Ukraine on a point of order.

Mr. Goumenny (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): Our delegation would like to draw attention, with respect to the report contained in provisional document A/50/851, to the fact that while the decision taken at the resumed forty-ninth session of the General Assembly was entitled

(*spoke in English*)

> "Relocation of Belarus and Ukraine to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232".

(*spoke in Russian*)

the question of the relocation of Belarus has, as members know, been resolved in a most satisfactory manner. We would request, therefore, that the relevant changes be made to provisional document A/50/851 to the title, the last part of paragraph 1, paragraph 3 and the draft decision itself, which appears in paragraph 6.

I should also like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the fact that our delegation believes that this item was not given sufficient consideration by the Fifth Committee at the fiftieth session. Had this issue been taken up in a more comprehensive manner, this would have afforded a greater opportunity to discuss the problem, and we could have arrived at not only a procedural but a substantive solution.

We trust that at the resumed fiftieth session this problem will be resolved.

The President: We shall take note of the observations just made by the representative of Ukraine.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

(a) Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/850 and Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part I of its report (A/50/850).

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wish to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report (A/50/850/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

(b) Relocation of Ukraine to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/851)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 160

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/852)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (resolution 50/213).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 160.

Agenda item 116

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/842)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Questions related to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 50/214).

The President: Draft resolution II (A to C), entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly also wishes to adopt draft resolution II?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 50/215 A to C).

The President: Draft resolution III, entitled "Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 50/216).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1996-1997" and was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 50/217).

The President: Draft resolution V, entitled "Working Capital Fund for the biennium 1996-1997", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 50/218).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of position.

Ms. Goicochea (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have just adopted the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, which is of special importance for the United Nations and for the international community in general, for without question it is a budget of change.

It is a budget of change because concepts are changed; they now seem to be corporate concepts. The Organization's commitment to the decisions of its Member States is changed, because now — let us not deceive ourselves — it will be much more difficult, if not impossible, for the United Nations to fulfil the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Moreover, the very essence of the budgetary process established in resolution 41/213 is changed. The outline seems to be an outline no more; instead, there is an attempt to impose a ceiling. The priorities set by the General Assembly are not being respected, and attempts are being made to impose different priorities despite the decisions of this legislative organ. In other forums there is an attempt to eliminate the Committee on Programme and Coordination, the strengthening of which was part of the consensus package adopted in resolution 41/213.

We all know that this process was established in an attempt to meet the concerns felt primarily by the major contributor about the budgetary process, including the procedures for decision-making. It was hoped that following the adoption of the resolution, that contributor — which is also the major debtor — would fulfil its financial commitments responsibly, in full and on time. In its pattern of payments over the last nine years, its imposition of conditions for payment has survived, been renewed and taken new forms which have brought about the adoption without a vote of this resolution, about which many of us harbour doubts but which satisfies, first and foremost, the major contributor.

We participated in negotiations that were tainted from the outset, the results of which will be felt only in the medium and the long term. My delegation wonders whether this is really the budget desired by those of us that believe in the United Nations, those of us that, like my delegation, are fully and unconditionally committed to its purposes and principles. Can we possibly believe that the spirit that guided the founders of the Organization 50 years ago is reflected in this budget? In our view, it is not.

The budget we have adopted responds first and foremost to the hegemonic and political interests of the major contributor, which was once again threatening to paralyse the activities of the Organization if its own domestic pressures were not addressed. My delegation believes that we must all reflect deeply on what we have just done. This could be the first in a series of measures leading, in essence, not to the reform but to the destruction of this international Organization *par excellence*. In our attempt to ensure the functioning of the United Nations, we may be compromising its nature, and by the time we realize what we have done the damage may be irreparable.

Cuba's consistent, unconditional and unswerving commitment to the United Nations and its political flexibility led us to join a consensus in which few believe but which many applaud because they believe it will help improve the Organization's financial situation. Let us hope these expectations will be met.

The Cuban delegation hoped that the budget adopted would enable the Secretariat to carry out fully the tasks entrusted to it. But we have severely reduced its resources, and let us now act in congruity with the decisions we have taken. Still, we await with great interest the study of areas where savings could be made so that the final decisions can be taken.

A number of matters remain pending, such as sections 3 and 21. With respect to the latter, allow me to say that my delegation hoped that the negotiations could have enabled us to decide upon genuine, effective structural and programmatic follow-up to the Declaration on the Right to Development and that we could have allocated the resources requested for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

My delegation hopes that when the Fifth Committee resumes its work we will be able to face more realistically the difficult and distressing situation into which we are leading the United Nations, whose fiftieth anniversary we have just celebrated but whose future we may be harming with decisions such as the one we have just adopted.

Mr. Hanson (Canada): My delegation welcomes the adoption without a vote of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. My delegation attaches particular importance to consensus decision-making in budgetary matters and therefore wishes to express its appreciation to you, Sir; to our coordinators, Mr. Martin Sharp of Australia and Mr. Movses Abelian of Armenia; and to all other representatives who participated in the consultations that built and shaped this consensus.

This budget is a complex and highly technical document. My delegation is pleased to note the innovations in part IV of the text of the budget resolution, which establish a total level of expenditures of $2.608 billion and which mandate a projected level of savings to be achieved during the biennium.

It is also emphasized at a number of points in the text that efficiency gains and savings should be made without adversely affecting mandated programmes and activities. My delegation agrees completely. We have long advocated that the search for savings should be targeted on non-programme activities. In other words, we want to cut the overhead expenses, which, as defined in Canada, account for over 53 per cent of the Organization's expenses. As our peace-keepers sometimes say, we want to improve the ratio of teeth to tail.

In the course of our consultations, we have had occasion to discuss in detail the newly-formed efficiency board, established by the Secretary-General in due exercise of his authority. We wish to commend the Secretary-General for this initiative and to suggest that the search for savings mandated by this resolution could with confidence be entrusted to the efficiency board.

My delegation believes that increased efficiency should be a matter of major concern to all Member States. Some programmes are obviously higher priorities for some Member States than they are for others, but efficient delivery of those programmes should concern us all equally. Efficient peace-keeping means a peace more securely kept. Efficient development delivers greater benefits to those who need them most. Efficient delivery of human rights programmes means better protection of human rights. Efficient public information means a better-informed public. An efficient administration means lower costs and more rapid and effective delivery of services all around.

Another matter of concern to my delegation is internal borrowing from special accounts, a practice that now goes well beyond the intent of the authorities which this Assembly first established in 1958. My delegation supports the changes that the United Kingdom has proposed to achieve greater transparency and more effective control of this practice by Member States.

The experience of the past days and weeks of consultations leads my delegation to believe that further improvements are necessary in the budgetary process, improvements that would enable the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly to focus on the major questions of objectives, deliverables and priorities, and engage less in the resolution of detailed questions of resource allocation, which have recently occupied so much of our time.

We believe that programme budgets for future bienniums should be prepared using a strategic planning approach that will, *inter alia*, define specific programme objectives and outcomes for each major programme; for each objective, identify priority activities to achieve results; allow flexibility in planning and implementation for reallocation of resources to highest priorities; strengthen the principle of accountability at the programme level, through the establishment of qualitative and quantitative performance targets for programmes; institute a planning, monitoring and evaluation process to continually assess effective and efficient use of resources in achieving stated objectives; and make provision for

reporting on results and use of resources to the Fifth Committee through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions throughout the biennium.

Finally, my delegation has a point to make in response to concerns that have been raised about the establishment of a total level of expenditures in this budget. A level of $2.608 billion has indeed been set, and concerns have been expressed that this could constrain mandated programmes and activities. And, since it is lower than the amounts in the expenditures sections of the budget, the real constraint lies not in the established level of expenditures but in the corresponding level of contributions when those expenditures are assessed.

My delegation would note that in 1995 a total amount of $1.135 billion was assessed on Member States in respect of the regular budget. But as of 30 November of this year $392 million, or 35 per cent of the assessment, was still outstanding. No delegation, in the course of our consultations on this budget, ever proposed a 35 per cent cut in agreed expenditures, but a large proportion of Member States, including the major contributor, by unilaterally imposing individual caps on the obligations that they have freely assumed, have achieved just that in the current biennium.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to recall Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Charter:

> "All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter."

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): My delegation is grateful for this opportunity to explain its position on the Working Capital Fund resolution, resolution 50/218, on which my delegation joined a consensus in the interests of concluding agreement on a hard-won budget settlement.

With hindsight, my delegation would have preferred, as others would, to have had more time to debate the important issues of principle, over which we were only able to skate in last night's final proceedings. We are glad that it is now agreed that we should revert to them early in our resumed session. But, given the way that our informal consultations evolved, there are certain clarifications that my Government wishes to make regarding this resolution on the Working Capital Fund.

This resolution does not give the Secretary-General a blank cheque to fund the deficits of major contributors through enforced borrowing from peace-keeping accounts.

If agreement on the budget meant that it would be fully funded, this Organization would be in a better state than it is. Unfortunately, agreeing the budget does not guarantee that the amounts will be honoured by all Member States, and therefore that the regular budget programmes can automatically be completed.

This is the real issue that needs to be addressed now: there can be no assumption that in the coming biennium all troop-contributor Governments will be prepared to fund the deficit in the regular budget through involuntary lending to the Organization as they have in the past.

My delegation consulted widely with other troop-contributor delegations before putting forward some very modest amendments to the draft resolution, draft resolution V, on the Working Capital Fund. These would simply have repeated in the body of the resolution the conditions which apply in the adopted text to the Secretariat's borrowing from peace-keeping accounts, and which are referred to very obscurely in paragraph 6. They would also have created greater transparency by making clear who is responsible for the deficits on the regular budget, and how much the troop-contributor States are owed at the time, if their reimbursements are diverted by the Secretary-General for the purposes of the regular budget. My delegation, with others, will continue to seek these and other improvements at the resumed session of the Fifth Committee.

The support expressed in informal consultations for these draft amendments shows the depth and breadth of concern about the mounting underlying problem. Similarly, the opposition to those proposals showed an increasing awareness of the scale of the cash flow crisis now looming. It also showed that delegations are beginning to recognize that the practice of enforced borrowing in this manner has developed beyond the scope of the provisions incorporated in the resolution we have just adopted.

There may have been in the minds of some delegations a belief that the Working Capital Fund resolution authorizes the Secretary-General in a general way to borrow from peace-keeping accounts if necessary to stave off a crisis. But the conditions are very specific:

the borrowing may be done only as a last resort. The first resort, in my delegation's view, should be to seek payment from those in arrears and from others that pay late in the financial year, before obliging those that have already paid and are in credit with the Organization to pay for a second time. The second condition is that the borrowing should be without prejudice to the programmes for which the peace-keeping funds were contributed. The Secretary-General himself has said many times that the non-reimbursement of United Nations debts to peace-keepers is prejudicial to the willingness of contributors to volunteer their services. Therefore, hitherto neither of these conditions has been fulfilled.

There may also have been a belief that by not objecting strongly to this practice in the past troop contributors have silently approved the reality. Let me therefore repeat what my own Foreign Secretary said in this Hall on 24 September this year, and which represents the formal position of my Government, that borrowing from peace-keeping funds to fund the regular budget is not acceptable.

The accumulation of further arrears by one Member State whose legislature is not willing to commit itself to honouring those debts can only increase the financial risk to the Organization and its creditors.

I hope this is clear. My delegation believes that the responsibility for any cash flow crisis lies with those who do not pay, and not with those who do. My delegation will not assume any obligation to pay their deficit, or any blame for the consequences.

Therefore, we believe that the Secretariat will in practice be obliged in any case, as it should also be in principle, to seek the approval of the General Assembly, including the troop contributors, if it wishes to continue this practice from now on.

Mr. Birenbaum (United States of America): Ambassador Albright had hoped to be here today to present the position of the United States on the adoption of the programme budget, but she was not able to be with us this morning.

The United States views the adoption of the United Nations programme budget for 1996-1997 with mixed feelings. The budget is higher than we would have preferred and recommended. For that reason, we cannot fully support it. At the same time, the budget is below the level of expenditures for United Nations programmes during the current 1994-1995 biennium. It is a true no-growth budget. This is unprecedented, and is a sharp and welcome departure from business as usual.

The negotiations over this budget have been long and difficult. My Government made far-reaching recommendations to eliminate waste, reduce spending for low priorities and improve management practices. Although not all of our recommendations were accepted, we appreciate the constructive and forthright nature of the debate that occurred. We want to express our special gratitude to Mr. Martin Sharp for his fairness and skill in moderating the discussions. I want also to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Movses Abelian, who played a central role in concluding these negotiations.

As the consensus agreement reflects, the majority of United Nations Members understand the urgency of reforming and revitalizing the Organization. That is important today; it will be even more important in the months and years ahead. The numbers tell the story. During the current biennium, the United Nations will spend approximately $2.63 billion. The Secretariat had proposed a budget for 1996-1997 that would have amounted to $2.828 billion, an increase of $200 million attributable not to programme growth, but to inflation and other mandatory cost increases. The agreement reached today is for a budget of $2.608 billion, a figure below that of the previous two years. While my Government does not endorse this budget level, we are not blocking consensus adoption because of the following considerations and understandings.

First, this agreement acknowledges the need to reduce low-priority spending as a central part of the United Nations budget process. This is, of course, common sense, but it has not until now been common practice. Under this budget, the Secretary-General must report back to the General Assembly a plan for achieving approximately $100 million in savings to stay within the $2.608 billion level; the United Nations cannot spend more than this amount. This is in addition to other reductions contained in the budget. Inevitably, this will require that many inflation and other mandatory cost increases be absorbed, not simply added on. This will be a challenge to managers, but the alternative is chronic and unsupported budget growth. Looking to the future, restraint in budgeting is a habit we must develop, for it will be essential both to the United Nations and to the entire United Nations system.

Secondly, the spending ceiling in this budget must be a true ceiling, not a target. Given the dynamic nature of the world, we can expect the Secretariat to come to the Assembly during the next two years with additional, likely meritorious, spending proposals. My Government will insist that such proposals be accompanied by reprogramming from the accounts in this budget, not by adding to them. We have approved a no-growth budget; we must have the discipline now to live within it.

In that regard, we are pleased that the very first paragraph of the budget resolution reaffirms resolution 41/213. That resolution requires, among many other things, that proposed new spending be accommodated within the contingency fund, absorbed in the programme budget or deferred to the next budget. This provision has not been enforced effectively. It should be, and we expect the reaffirmation will ensure that it is.

Thirdly, the 9 per cent pay increase for Professional United Nations staff that has been proposed by the International Civil Service Commission is not accepted, and funds to implement it are not included in this budget. Instead, the recommendations will be returned to the Commission with instructions that it reconsider those recommendations using a more accurate methodology.

Finally, this budget resolution includes a number of significant reform measures. It includes a comprehensive review to increase the outsourcing of services. It strengthens the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Also, a separate resolution calling for specific plans to reduce paperwork has been adopted. These reforms will make the United Nations work better and cost less.

The United States will work closely with the Secretariat and with Member States to implement the programme reductions made necessary by this budget. We know that many countries are concerned that budget cuts may cause significant harm to important ongoing programme priorities of the United Nations. However, my Government is convinced that the budget levels contained in this agreement can be achieved without harm to those priority goals.

Fortunately, the Secretariat has planned, and is already implementing, management improvements that will yield substantial savings, especially during the second half of the biennium. The budget resolution transforms these improvements from executive policy into legislative requirement.

Although imperfect, this budget marks another in a series of significant steps towards a more effective, efficient and accountable United Nations. It is a major down payment on a reformed United Nations.

During the past year we have felt the positive effects of the new, independent Office of Internal Oversight Services, which has identified for correction a wide range of poor management practices and some cases of outright fraud. We have benefited as well from the introduction of a new personnel appraisal system and a variety of cost-cutting measures proposed by Under-Secretary-General Joseph Connor. And the Secretary-General has established a High-level Working Group on reform to recommend more extensive steps to restructure and improve United Nations operations.

Although this budget is not as lean as my Government originally proposed, it is perhaps the most austere ever adopted by the General Assembly. It should be viewed by the Secretariat, and by the world, as a mandate for change. If the United Nations is to be an effective and relevant force in the twenty-first century, as my Government hopes and believes it will be, the pace of reform must continue to accelerate.

Let us never forget that this world Organization is unique and indispensable. Its credibility and reputation matter. In many areas of law and social policy it establishes the standard by which national actions and efforts are judged. It is both necessary and appropriate, therefore, that we hold the Organization itself to a high standard.

Those who founded the United Nations half a century ago were not motivated by a desire to create the world's best-paid international bureaucracy; they did not, in establishing the Economic and Social Council, envisage a panel with 150 subsidiary bodies; they did not fashion this great forum so that the same tired issues could be debated year after year, filling libraries with reports too heavy to lift and too dull to read.

The goal of the founders was to build a platform of principle and law upon which all the peoples of the world might stand. They wanted an Organization dedicated to maintaining peace, promoting human dignity and enriching and saving lives.

We are the inheritors of that legacy. To honour it, we must insist not merely on competence in the administration and operation of United Nations

programmes, but on excellence. We must demand value. And we must provide focus, for a United Nations that tries to do everything will do nothing very well.

The difficulty of this year's budget negotiation is not surprising. And the outcome is not a climax, but a prelude to future debates and discussions. My Government is committed to the success and revitalization of the United Nations, and is convinced that this will be possible only through a programme of comprehensive, far-reaching and sustained reform. That is a goal towards which all nations must work and from which all nations will benefit.

Mr. Rowe (Australia): My delegation welcomes the adoption of the programme budget for the biennium 1996 to 1997 without a vote. As the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee said in introducing the reports of the Fifth Committee, the Australian delegation, through Mr. Martin Sharp, was closely involved in the negotiations as coordinator. On behalf of Mr. Sharp, I wish to express our appreciation for the kind words that have been addressed to him. I also wish to thank the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, all delegations and the Secretariat for the cooperation they gave to the coordinator. In particular, I wish to thank Mr. Movses Abelian of Armenia for so skilfully bringing the coordination process to a successful conclusion.

While this budget represents an important contribution to a more effective and efficient United Nations, we share the view that further improvements are necessary in the budget process and that a strategic planning approach, which Canada has suggested, is something we should consider seriously.

Australia was pleased to join in the consensus on the resolution on the Working Capital Fund. At the same time, I wish to register our support for the proposals put forward by the United Kingdom delegation in relation to that resolution, which we consider should be taken up again at the resumed session next year.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 116 and of all the reports of the Fifth Committee.

Programme of work

The President: Apart from organizational matters and items that may have to be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, and bearing in mind the action already taken by the Assembly at its 46th, 68th, 76th, 78th, 82nd, 89th, 93rd, 95th, 96th, 98th, 99th and 100th plenary meetings concerning agenda items 12, 16 (b), 20 (b), 38, 42, 112 (b), 114 to 116, 120 to 123, 125 to 126, 128, 131 to 138, 159 and 160, I should like to propose that the following agenda items remain for consideration during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly:

Item 10	Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization
Item 12	Report of the Economic and Social Council
Item 15 (c)	Election of a member of the International Court of Justice
Item 16 (b)	Election of twelve members of the World Food Council
Item 20 (b)	Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions
Item 23	Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
Item 28	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Item 35	Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte
Item 38	The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti
Item 42	Question of Palestine
Item 47	Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters
Item 55	Question of Cyprus
Item 112 (b)	Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms
Item 114	*Review of the efficiency of the* administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Item 115 Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995

Item 116 Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Item 117 Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

Item 118 Joint Inspection Unit

Item 120 Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Item 121 United Nations common system

Item 122 Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East

Item 123 Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Item 124 Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

Item 125 Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Item 126 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

Item 127 Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Item 128 Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Item 129 Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

Item 130 Financing of the liquidation of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

Item 131 Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus

Item 132 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Item 133 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Item 134 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Item 135 Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

Item 136 Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Item 137 Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Item 138 Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations

Item 149 Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Item 151 Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Item 159 Human resources management

Item 160 Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Item 163 Strengthening of the United Nations system

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that those agenda items should remain for consideration during the fiftieth session of the Assembly?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to take the opportunity to say a few words.

During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, a historic anniversary of the United Nations, we pursued, as in previous sessions, important work in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees. We also held a Special Commemorative Meeting that brought to this Hall the Heads of State, Heads of Government and other distinguished representatives of all Member States to celebrate this Organization's achievements, to identify its weaknesses and to point to the future with confidence.

Earlier, His Holiness Pope John Paul II had come to New York specifically to address this assembly of nations. The urgency of his message and the confidence he displayed in the United Nations should be remembered by all of us.

It has indeed been a full and exhausting session. But our work is not yet complete. This year of celebration must also be a year of strengthening. This Organization and indeed the United Nations system as a whole can only benefit from the continued momentum in favour of reform which has taken hold at the United Nations. Five working groups of this Assembly, four of which are chaired by the President of the General Assembly, have been debating or will discuss important and urgent matters related to the reform of the United Nations.

As members are all aware, organizational aspects of the working groups have been dealt with over the last few weeks and the ground is now prepared for progress in an efficient and coordinated manner. Their substantive work will begin in January, and I am very much looking forward to the opportunity to be able to contribute to such an important task. I am hopeful that the spirit of the fiftieth anniversary — that of good will, confidence and faith in the future of the United Nations — will prevail and that the opportunity for change will not be lost.

In the meantime, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the cooperation and support demonstrated by all in the work of this Assembly. In particular, I must recognize the sterling and invaluable efforts and dedication of the staff of the General Assembly secretariat and of the Conference Services and other support staff which made our meetings possible. To all and to the Secretary-General, who is here with us today, I wish a happy holiday and a new year full of promise.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.